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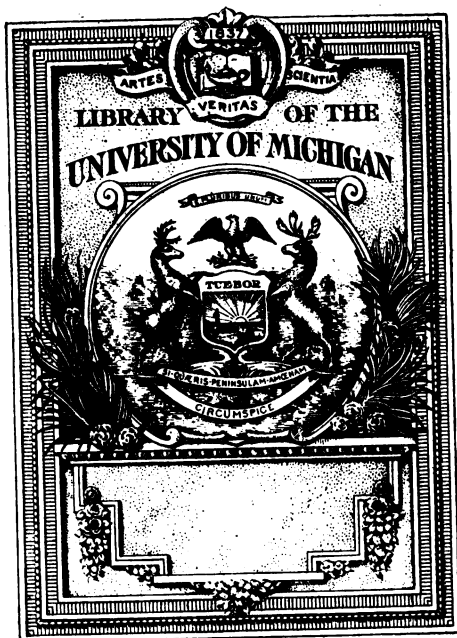
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THE GIFT OF
Prof. F. N. Scott

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B655ma

THE
MILLER'S MAID,

BY
ROBERT BLOOMFIELD.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE HERMIT,

BY
OLIVIER GOLDSMITH.

—••—
BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED.

—••—
LONDON:
DARTON & Co., HOLBORN HILL.

—
1855.

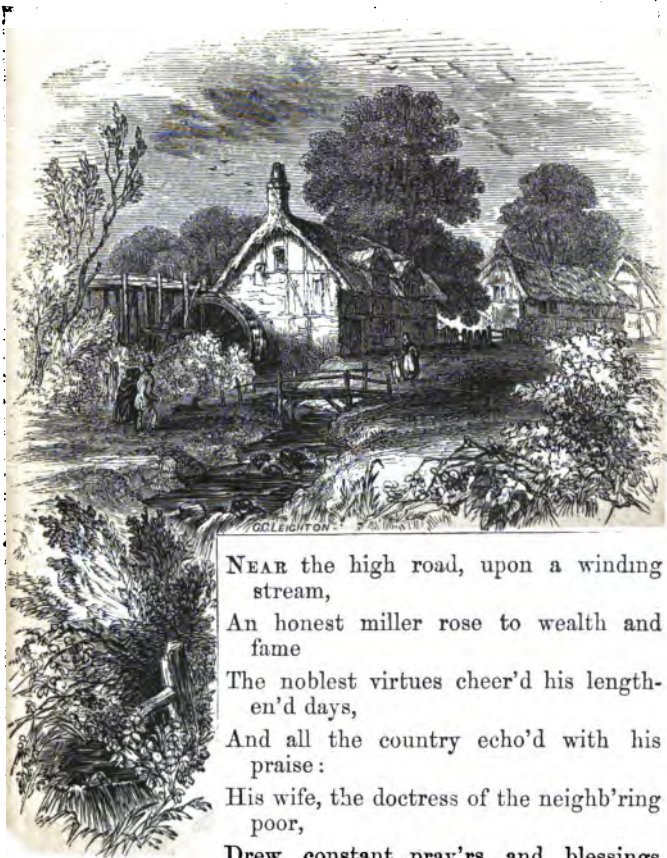
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THE MILLER'S MAID.

— 46 —



NEAR the high road, upon a winding
stream,
An honest miller rose to wealth and
fame
The noblest virtues cheer'd his length-
en'd days,
And all the country echo'd with his
praise:
His wife, the doctress of the neighb'ring
poor,
Drew constant pray'rs and blessings
round his door.

One summer's night, (the hour of rest was come,)
Darkness unusual overspread their home;



' Dame, we should know before we go
to rest,

' Whence comes this girl, and how she
came distrest.

' Wake her, and ask ; for she is sorely
bruised ;

' I long to know by whom she's thus
misused—

' Child, what's your name ? how came you in the storm ?

' Have you no home to keep you dry and warm ?

' Who gave you all those wounds your shoulders show ?

' Where are your parents ? Whither would you go ?'

The stranger bursting into tears, look'd pale,
And this the purport of her artless tale :



'I have no parents; and no friends beside:
'I well remember when my mother died:
'My brother cried; and so did I that day:
'We had no father;—he was gone away;
'That night we left our homes new clothes to wear,
'The workhouse found them; we were carried there.
'We lov'd each other dearly; when we met
'We always shar'd what trifles we could get.
'But George was older by a year than me:—
'He parted from me, and was sent to sea.
'"Good-bye, dear Phœbe," the poor fellow said:
'Perhaps he'll come again; perhaps he's dead.
'When I grew strong enough I went to place:
'My mistress had a sour, ill-natur'd face;
'And though I've been so often beat and chid,
'I strove to please her, sir; indeed I did.
'Weary and spiritless to bed I crept,
'And always cried at night before I slept.
'This morning I offended, and I bore
'A cruel beating, worse than all before.
'Unknown to all the house, I ran away;
'And thus far travelled through the sultry day;
'And, O don't send me back! I dare not go—'
'I send you back!' the miller cried, 'no, no.'
The appeals of wretchedness had weight with him,
And sympathy would warm him every limb;
He muttered, glorying in the work begun,
Well done, my little wench, 'twas nobly done!
Then said, with looks more cheering than the fire,
And feelings such as pity can inspire,
'My house has childless been this many a year;
'While you deserve it you shall tarry here.'
The orphan mark'd the ardour of his eye,
Blest his kind words and thank'd him with a sigh.

Thus was the sacred compact doubly seal'd;
Thus were her spirits rais'd, her bruises heal'd.
Thankful and cheerful too, no more afraid,
Thus little Phœbe was the Miller's Maid.
Grateful they found her; patient of controul;
A most bewitching gentleness of soul,
Made pleasure of what work she had to do:
She grew in stature and in beauty too.

Five years she pass'd in this delightful home;
Five happy years: but when the sixth was come,
The miller, from a market-town hard by,
Brought home a sturdy youth, his strength to try,
To raise the sluice-gates early every morn,
To heave his powdered sacks, and grind his corn:
And meeting Phœbe, whom he lov'd so dear,
'I've brought you home a husband, girl; d'ye hear.
'He begg'd for work; his money seem'd but scant:
'Those that will work, 'tis pity they should want.
'So use him well, and we shall shortly see
Whether he merits what I've done, like thee.'

Now throbb'd her heart,—a new sensation quite,—
Whene'er the comely stranger was in sight:
For he at once assiduously strove
To please so sweet a maid, and win her love:
At every corner stopp'd her in her way,
And saw fresh beauties opening every day.
He took delight in tracing in her face
The mantling blush, and every native grace
That sensibility would bring to view,
When love he mention'd:—Love and Honour true,
But Phœbe still was shy, and wish'd to know
More of the honest youth, whose manly brow,
She verily believ'd was truth's own throne,
And all his words as artless as her own:



Most true she judg'd: yet long the
 youth forbore
 Divulging where, and how, he liv'd
 before ;
 And seem'd to strive his history to hide,
 Till fair esteem enlisted on his side.
 The miller saw, and mention'd in his praise,
 The prompt fidelity of all his ways :
 Till in a vacant hour, the dinner done,
 One day he joking cried, ' Come here, my son !
 'Tis pity that so good a lad as you
 Beneath my roof should bring disorders new !

- 'But here's my Phœbe,—once so light and airy
'She'd trip along the passage like a fairy—
'Has lost her swiftness quite, since here you came—
'And yet I can't perceive the girl is lame!
'The obstacles she meets with still fall thicker:
'Old as I am, I'd turn the corner quicker.'

The youth blush'd deep, and Phœbe hung her head,

The good man smiled, and thus again he said:

- 'Not that I deem it matter of surprise,
'That you should love to gaze at Phœbe's eyes;
'But be explicit, boy; and deal with honour:
'I feel my happiness depend upon her.
'When here you came you'd sorrow on your brow
'And I've forborn to question you till now,
'First, then, say what thou art.' He instant bow'd,
And thus, in Phœbe's hearing, spoke aloud.

'Thus far experienc'd, Sir, in you I find

All that is generous, fatherly, and kind;

And while you look for proofs of real worth,

- 'You'll not regard the meanness of my birth.
'When, pennyless and sad, you met with me,
'I'd just escap'd the dangers of the sea;
'Resolv'd to try my fortune on the shore,
'To get my bread; and trust the waves no more:
'Having no home, nor parents, left behind,
'I'd all my fortune, all my friends, to find.
'Keen disappointment wounded me that morn:
'For, trav'ling near the spot where I was born,
'I at the well-known door where I was bred,
'Inquir'd who still was living, who was dead:
'But first, and most, I sought with anxious fear,
'Tidings to gain of her who once was dear;
'A girl, with all the meekness of the dove,
'The constant sharer of my childhood's love;

'She call'd me, Brother:—which I heard with pride,
'Though now suspect we are not so allied.
'Thus much I learnt; (no more the churls would say;)
'She went to service, and she ran away,
'And scandal added.'—'Hold!' the miller cried,
And, in an instant, stood at Phoebe's side;
For he observ'd, while list'ning to the tale,
Her spirits falter'd, and her cheeks turn'd pale;
Whilst her clasp'd hands descended to her knee,
She sinking, whisper'd forth, "O God, 'tis he!"
The good man, though he guess'd the pleasing truth,
Was far too busy to inform the youth;
But stir'd himself amain to aid his wife,
Who soon restor'd the trembler back to life.
Awhile insensible she still appear'd;
But, "Oh, my Brother," was distinctly heard:
Th' astonish'd youth now held her to his breast.
And tears and kisses soon explain'd the rest.

Past deeds now from each tongue alternate fell;
For news of dearest import both could tell.
Fondly from childhood's tears to youth's full prime,
They match'd the incidents of jogging time;
And prov'd that, when with tyranny oppress,
Poor Phoebe groan'd with wounds and broken rest,
George felt no less: was harass'd and forlorn;
A rope's end follow'd him from night to morn.
And in that very storm when Phoebe fled,
When the rain drench'd her yet unshelter'd head;
That very storm he on the ocean brav'd,
The vessel founder'd, and the boy was sav'd!
Mysterious heaven! And O with what delight
She told the happy issue of her flight:
To his charm'd heart a living picture drew;
And gave to hospitality its due!

The list'ning host observ'd the gentle pair,
And ponder'd on the means that brought them there :
Convinc'd, while unimpeach'd their virtue stood,
'Twas heav'n's high will that he should do them good.

But now the anxious Dame, impatient grown,
Demanded what the youth had heard or known,
Whereon to ground those doubts but just exprest ;
Doubts which must interest the feeling breast ;
Her brother wert thou, George ? how ; prithee say
Canst thou forgo, or cast that name away ?'

'No living proofs have I,' the youth replied,
'That we by closest ties are not allied ;
'But in my memory live, and ever will,
'A mother's dying words—I hear them still :
'She said, to one who watch'd her parting breath,
"Don't separate the children at my death,
"They're not both mine ; but"—here the scene was clos'd ;
'She died ; and left us helpless and expos'd :
'Nor time hath thrown, nor reason's opening power,
'One friendly ray on that benighted hour.'

Ne'er did the chieftains of a warring state
Hear from the oracle their half-told fate
With more religious fear, or more suspense
Than Phœbe now endur'd :—for every sense
Became absorb'd in this unwelcome theme ;
Nay, every meditation, every dream,
Th' inexplicable sentence held to view,
"They're not both mine," was every morning new
For, till this hour, the maid had never prov'd
How far she was enthrall'd, how much she lov'd :
In that fond character he first appear'd ;
His kindness charm'd her, and his smiles endear'd :
This dubious mystery the passion crost ;
Her peace was wounded, and her lover lost.

For George, with all his resolution strove
To check the progress of his growing love ;
Or, if he e'er indulg'd a tender kiss,
Th' unravell'd secret robb'd him of his bliss.
Health's foe, Suspense, so irksome to be borne,
An ever-piercing and retreating thorn
Hung on their hearts, when nature bade them rise,
And stole content's bright ensign from their eyes.

The good folks saw the change, and griev'd to find
These troubles labouring in Phœbe's mind ;
They lov'd them both ; and with one voice propos'd,
The only means whence truth might be disclos'd ;
That, when the summer months should shrink the rill,
And scarce its languid stream would turn the mill,
When the spring broods, and pigs and lambs were rear'd,
(A time when George and Phœbe might be spar'd,)
Their birth-place they should visit once again,
To try with joint endeavours to obtain
From record, or tradition, what might be
To chain, or set their chain'd affections free :
Affinity beyond all doubts to prove ;
Or clear the road for nature and for love.

Never, till now, did Phœbe count the hours,
Or think May long, or wish away its flowers ;
With mutual sighs both fann'd the wings of time
As we climb hills and gladden as we climb,
* And reach at last the distant promis'd seat,
Casting the glowing landscape at our feet.
Oft had the morning rose with dew been wet,
And oft the journeying sun in glory set,
Beyond the willow'd meads of vigorous grass,
The steep green hill, and woods they were to pass ;
When now the day arriv'd : impatience reign'd ;
And George,—by trifling obstacles detain'd,



His bending blackthorn on the threshold
 prest,
 Survey'd the windward clouds, and
 hop'd the best.

Phoebe, attir'd with every modest grace,
 While health and beauty revell'd in her face
 Came forth ; but soon evinc'd an absent mind,
 For, back she turn'd for something left behind ;
 Again the same, till George grew tir'd of home,
 And peevishly exclaim'd " Come Phoebe, come."
 Another hindrance yet he had to feel :
 As from the door they tripp'd with nimble heel,
 A poor old man, foot-founder'd and alone,
 Thus urgent spoke, in trouble's genuine tone ;
 ' My pretty maid, if happiness you seek,
 ' May disappointment never fade your cheek !—
 ' Your's be the joy ;—yet feel another's woe :
 ' O leave some little gifts before you go.'

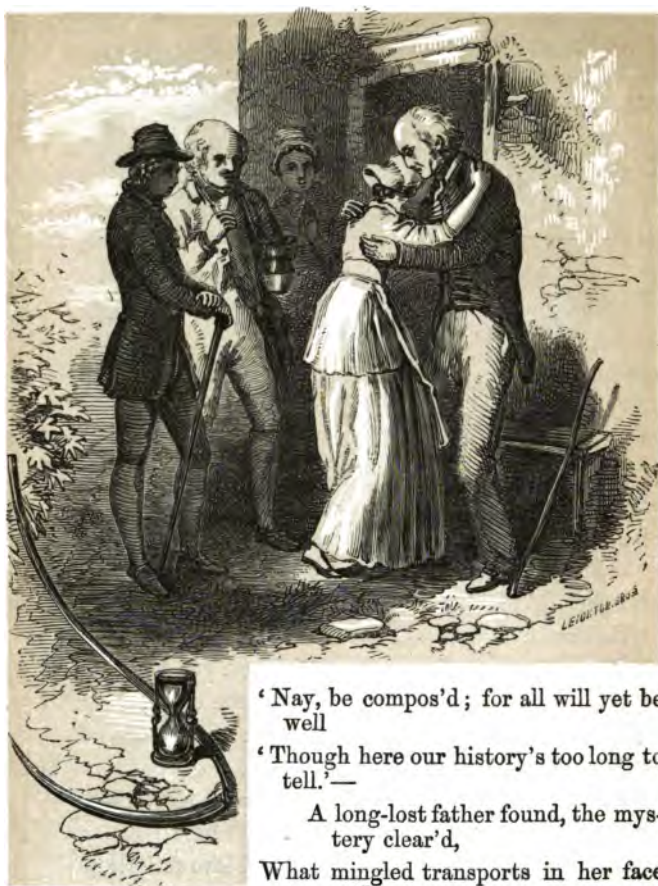


His words struck home ; and back she turn'd again,
 (The ready friend of indigence and pain,)
 To banish hunger from his shatter'd frame ;
 And close behind her, lo, the miller came,
 With jug in hand, and cried, " George, why such haste ?
 " Here take a draught, and let that soldier taste."
 " Thanks for your bounty, Sir ;" the veteran said ;
 Threw down his wallet, and made bare his head ;
 And straight began, tho' mix'd with doubts and fears,
 Th' unprepar'd history of his latter years.
 " I cross'd th' Atlantic with my comrades brave,
 " Where sickness sweeps whole regiments to the grave,
 " Yet I've escap'd ; and bear my arms no more ;
 " My age discharg'd me when I came on shore.

"My wife, I've heard,"—and here he wip'd his eyes,—
"In the cold corner of the church-yard lies.
"By her consent it was I left my home;
"Employment fail'd, and poverty was come;
"The bounty tempted me;—she had it all:
"We parted; and I've seen my betters fall.
"Yet, as I'm spar'd, though in this piteous case,
"I'm trav'ling homeward to my native place;
"Though should I reach that dear remember'd spot
"Perhaps old Granger will be quite forgot."

All eyes beheld young George with wonder start:
Strong were the secret bodings of his heart;
Yet not indulg'd: for he with doubts survey'd
By turns the stranger and the lovely maid.
"Had you no children?"—"Yes, young man, I'd two:
"A boy, if still he lives, as old as you;
"Yet not my own; but likely so to prove;
"Though but the pledge of an unlawful love:
"I cherish'd him to hide a sister's shame:
"He shar'd my best affections, and my name.
"But why, young folks, should I detain you here?
"Go: and may blessings wait upon your cheer,
"I too will travel on;—perhaps to find
"The only treasure that I left behind.
"Such kindly thoughts my fainting hopes revive,—
"Phœbe, my cherub, art thou still alive?"

Could nature hold!—could youthful love forbear!
George clasp'd the wond'ring maid, and whisper'd 'there!
'You're mine for ever!—O, sustain the rest;
'And hush the tumult of your throbbing breast.'
Then to the soldier turn'd, with manly pride,
And fondly led his long-intended bride.
'Here, see your child; nor wish a sweeter flower
'Tis George that speaks; thou'lt bless the happy hour!—



'Nay, be compos'd; for all will yet be well

'Though here our history's too long to tell.'—

A long-lost father found, the mystery clear'd,

What mingled transports in her face appear'd

The gazing veteran stood with hands uprais'd—
 'Art thou indeed my child! then, God be prais'd,'
 O'er his rough cheeks the tears profusely spread:
 Such as fools say become not men to shed;
 Past hours of bliss, regenerated charms,
 Rose, when he felt his daughter in his arms:

So tender was the scene, the generous Dame
Wept, as she told of Phoebe's virtuous fame,
And the good host, with gestures passing strange,
Abstracted seem'd through fields of joy to range ;
Rejoicing that his favour'd roof should prove
Virtue's asylum, and the nurse to love ;
Rejoicing that to him the task was given,
While his full soul was mounting up to heav'n.

But now, as from a dream his reason sprung,
And heartiest greetings dwelt upon his tongue :
The sounding kitchen floor at once receiv'd
The happy group, with all their fears reliev'd ;
"Soldier," he cried, "you've found your girl 'tis true :
"But suffer me to be a father too ;
"For, never child that blest a parent's knee,
"Could show more duty than she has to me.
"Strangely she came ; affliction chas'd her hard :
"I pitied her ;—and this is my reward !
"Here sit you down ; recount your perils o'er.
"Henceforth be this your home ; and grieve no more :
"Plenty hath shower'd her dewdrops on my head ;
"Care visits not my table, nor my bed.
"My heart's warm wishes thus then I fulfil :
"My Dame and I can live without the mill.
"George, take the whole ; I'll near you still remain,
"To guide your judgment in the choice of grain :
"In virtue's path commence your prosperous life :
"And from my hand receive your worthy wife.
"Rise, Phoebe ; rise, my girl !—kneel not to me ;
"But to that pow'r who interpos'd for thee.
"Integrity hath mark'd your favourite youth ;
"Fair budding honour, constancy, and truth :
"Go to his arms ;—and may unsullied joys
"Bring smiling round me, rosy girls and boys !

"I'll love them for thy sake. And may your days
"Glide on, as glides the stream that never stays :
"Bright as whose shingled bed, till life's decline,
"May all your worth, and all your virtues shine !"



END OF THE MILLER'S MAID.

THE HERMIT.



‘TURN gentle hermit of the dale,
And guide my lonely way,
To where yon taper cheers the vale
With hospitable ray.

‘For here forlorn and lost I tread,
With fainting steps and slow;
Where wilds, immeasurably spread,
Seem length’ning as I go.’

‘Forbear, my son!’ the Hermit cries,
‘To tempt the dangerous gloom;
For yonder faithless phantom flies
To lure thee to thy doom.

‘Here to the houseless child of want
My door is open still;
And though my portion is but scant,
I give it with good will.

‘Then turn to-night, and freely share
Whate’er my cell bestows;
My rushy couch and frugal fare,
My blessing and repose.

‘No flocks that range the valley free,
To slaughter I condemn:
Taught by that Power that pities me,
I learn to pity them:

' But from the mountain's grassy side,
A guiltless feast I bring ;
A scrip with herbs and fruits supplied,
And water from the spring.

' Then, pilgrim, turn ; thy cares forego ;
All earth-born cares are wrong :
Man wants but little here below,
Nor wants that little long.'

Soft as the dew from heaven descends,
His gentle accents fell :
The modest stranger lowly bends,
And follows to the cell.

Far in a wilderness obscure,
The lonely mansion lay ;
A refuge to the neighb'ring poor,
And strangers led astray.

No stores beneath its humble thatch
Requir'd a master's care ;
The wicket op'ning with a latch,
Receiv'd the harmless pair.

And now when busy crowds retire
To take their evening rest,
The Hermit trimm'd his little fire,
And cheer'd his pensive guest :

And spread his vegetable store,
And gaily press'd and smil'd ;
And, skill'd in legendary lore,
The ling'ring hours bequil'd.

Around in sympathetic mirth
Its tricks the kitten tries ;
The cricket chirrips in the hearth ;
The crackling faggot flies.

But nothing could a charm impart,
To soothe the stranger's woe ;
For grief was heavy at his heart,
And tears began to flow.

His rising care the Hermit spied,
With answering care opprest :
And, ' Whence, unhappy youth,' he cried,
' The sorrows of thy breast ?

' From better habitations spurn'd,
Reluctant dost thou rove ;
Or grieve for friendship unreturn'd,
Or unregarded love ?

' Alas ! the joys that fortune brings
Are trifling and decay ;
And those who prize the paltry things,
More trifling still than they.

And what is friendship but a name,
A charm that lulls to sleep ;
A shade that follows wealth or fame,
And leaves the wretch to weep.

' And love is still an emptier sound,
The modern fair-one's jest ;
On earth unseen, or only found
To warm the turtle's nest.